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ABSTRACT

The briefing paper examines the problems in providing vocational education to handicapped secondary students in South Carolina; reviews three major laws mandating vocational training for the handicapped (the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Vocational Educationl Act of 1963 as mandated through 1976); and discusses approaches planned by the State Department to resolve the problems. Among those initiatives are monitoring individualized education programs for their consideration of vocational education needs, development of appropriate program designs for vocational education, and provision of career counseling for handicapped students and their parents. (CL)

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Briefing Paper

EC 132416

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INITIATIVES PLANNED BY THE SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FOR THE PROVISION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TO HANDICAPPED PUPILS

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INTRODUCTION

Educational opportunity for handicapped children has recently become a central issue in the national conscience as evidenced by the passage of Public Law 94-142. Consistent with the provisions of law and the wishes of a democratic society, the denial of opportunity for handicapped children is rapidly becoming a memory rather than an action. The public schools of South Carolina have been quite successful in finding and placing these children in school programs; however, it is recognized that "placement" is not necessarily synonymous with "appropriate" instruction.

In the quest to provide quality programs for handicapped children, state and local agencies have identified several areas where service delivery challenges are enormously complex. This briefing paper has been developed in the hope that the citizenry of South Carolina will become more knowledgeable in the problems confronting public education of the handicapped, as well as gain more insight into the directions that the South Carolina Department of Education is pursuing for their resolutions.

Robert S. Black, Director
Office of Programs for the Handicapped

Briefing Paper

INITIATIVES PLANNED BY THE SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FOR THE PROVISION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TO HANDICAPPED PUPILS

One area of service delivery which has been identified by state and local agencies as enormously complex, dependent upon many factors, and requiring the expertise and skills from more than one educational discipline is the provision of vocational training for the handicapped. It is the purpose of this paper to discuss the problems identified by the South Carolina Department of Education in providing vocational education to handicapped pupils, to review the mandates of federal law relative to this issue, and to present the initiatives planned by the Department in seeking solutions to these problems.

Three Major Laws Mandate Vocational Training for the Handicapped

Congress, aware of the current status of the employment opportunities for the handicapped, has enacted or revised three major laws to assist the handicapped in attaining marketable skills and becoming a part of the job market. While each of these laws addresses issues of job training for the handicapped, the focus of each law is directed toward a separate segment of the educational preparation of the handicapped for employment.

Public Law 94-142

Public Law 94-142, the Education of the Handicapped Act, insures a free appropriate public education to all handicapped children. Included in its definition of special education is vocational education which is defined as:

> . . .organized educational programs which are directly related to the preparation of individuals for paid or unpaid employment, or for additional preparation for a career requiring other than a baccalaureate or advanced degree.
>
> Section 121a.14(C)(3)

Public Law 93-112

Major provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Public Law 93-112 (Section 504), protect the civil rights of the handicapped by providing equal opportunities in vocational

preparation and employment, and prohibiting discrimination on the basis of physical and mental handicaps in all federally assisted programs.

> A recipient (of federal funds) shall operate each program . . . so that the program . . . is readily accessible to handicapped persons.
>
> Section 22(a)

Public Law 94-482

Public Law 94-482, the Vocation Education Act of 1963 as amended through 1976, is designed to prepare for employment all students who can benefit from vocational education. The issue of preparing the handicapped for employment has been addressed in this act. Recognizing that special accommodations may be needed to assist the handicapped in benefiting from vocational education, an allotment from vocational education funds has been established for this purpose. The law states:

> The State shall expend at least 10 percent of the allotment under Section 102 (a) of the Act for handicapped persons as described in §104.303 (a). The State shall use these funds to the maximum extent possible to assist handicapped persons to participate in regular vocational education programs.
>
> Section 104.312

In summary, these three acts mandate that all handicapped students who can benefit from vocational education will not be denied the opportunity to participate in these programs and that every reasonable opportunity must be made to meet their vocational needs.

National Status of Vocational Education of Handicapped Pupils

Unemployment

Traditionally, secondary educational programs have been designed to meet the needs of students who are preparing for advanced degrees or who do not require special assistance to complete successfully established programs that provide occupational training. A 1976 report to the Congress states that of over 13 million individuals served in vocational education in 1974, less than 2 percent were handicapped, while 10 percent of the school population is estimated to have a handicapping condition. There is evidence to suggest that this lack of job training is reflected in the employment rate of the handicapped and that many handicapped are unable to find work.

According to statistics from a United States census report, 85 percent of the population with disabilities have incomes of less than $7,000.00, and 52 percent of these make less than $2,000.00 per year. Levitan and Taggart (1976) state that only 21 percent of the educable mentally handicapped are fully employed when they finish high school.

Underemployment

Underemployment, as well as unemployment, of the handicapped has been a cause for concern. Skill training often has been limited to separate or specifically designed programs that prepared handicapped for lower skill occupations, and the wide variety of occupations for which the nonhandicapped are prepared has not been available to the handicapped. A Congressional report, filed in 1976, cites the examples of a school district that provided a choice of only two vocational offerings to handicapped students, while offering nonhandicapped students in the same district a choice of about twenty (20) different careers.

Problems in Providing Vocational Education to Handicapped Students

The South Carolina Department of Education, through contact with local education agencies, parents of the handicapped, and other agencies, has identified many problems in providing vocational education to handicapped pupils. Those problems cited most frequently are related here.

Skills from more than one educational discipline required

Providing vocational training to handicapped students requires the skill of more than one educational discipline. Handicapped pupils may need special instruction, adaptations or modifications in the vocational curriculum in order to benefit from vocational education. Special educators have experience and training in handicapping conditions and skill in the teaching of basic subjects, but lack the expertise needed to provide occupational training. Conversely, vocational educators have knowledge in the teaching of vocational skills but lack experience or training with handicapped students. Thus, the expertise of two diverse disciplines is needed to assist in job preparation of the handicapped. A cooperative effort between the two educational areas is mandatory if the requirements of federal and state laws are to be met and the promise accompanying these laws is to be fulfilled.

Career planning complicated in a rapidly changing society

Career planning is essential to successful job training of the handicapped. But educators, in assisting handicapped pupils in establishing career goals, are faced with many sociological and economic changes that complicate this task.

When the United States was principally an agrarian society, families tended to be self-sufficient, producing the necessary supplies for existence. Skills and trades often were taught at home and passed down from older members of the family to its youth. Today, a rapidly advancing technological society has revolutionized social, cultural and economic patterns. While technological development has created many new careers, simultaneously, it has eliminated many service jobs. An inflationary economy in recent years has forced many businesses to curtail expansion and, consequently, reduced positions available for employment. Thus, knowing what vocational training is appropriate and what skills to teach becomes a more complex task for educators in view of the economical and sociological needs of a rapidly changing society.

Other problems facing educators in preparing handicapped for employment

Counseling

Physical barriers

Special personnel

IEP's

The problem of vocational training has been complicated further by the fact that a large number of handicapped students has lacked basic educational skills usually needed for job success. Additionally, programs to develop prerequisite skills needed for successful employment have not been available. Consequently, handicapped pupils have not always had the opportunity to learn personal and social behavior conducive to success in job experiences. Similarly, the number of programs to train personnel in special guidance/counseling techniques has been insufficient; thus, neither handicapped pupils nor parents of the handicapped have always been made aware of career opportunities available to the disabled. Training to assist personnel in understanding handicapped pupils and, hence, alleviating fears that these students will interrupt the teaching/learning process has been lacking. Renovations to remove physical barriers and make programs accessible to handicapped pupils are costly and such funds limited. Special personnel needed to assist in the modification or adaptation of the established curriculum have not been available. In many instances, individualized education plans (IEP's) developed for handicapped students have not identified appropriately the need for vocational education.

OBJECTIVES OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

All educational services for handicapped pupils are directed toward helping the student to become self-reliant. For many handicapped pupils, this goal of self-reliance should include the attainment of skills that will lead toward financial independence.

Vocational education for all handicapped pupils who are employable

Hence, the South Carolina Department of Education has set as a major objective the provision of an appropriate vocational education to all handicapped students of legal school age who are employable. This objective is in keeping with the position of the U.S. Office of Education which issued an official statement in July 1978.

> It is the position of the U.S. Office of Education that an appropriate comprehensive vocational education will be available and accessible to every handicapped person.

If this intent is to be met, a cooperative effort from several diverse educational disciplines will be needed. Vocational educators, special educators, vocational rehabilitators, and guidance personnel, through the development of a common goal, must assume responsibility for the provision of appropriate programs to handicapped pupils.

This challenge is not limited to a few local education agencies. Rather, educators throughout the nation and, consequently, the state who are involved in the implementation of Public Law 94-142 are faced with this task. Thus, it becomes the responsibility of the South Carolina Department of Education to develop comprehensive methods for assisting local education agencies and to provide direction for the achievement of this objective.

Initiatives Planned by the South Carolina Department of Education

Memorandum of Agreement between the Office of Programs for the Handicapped and the Office of Vocational Education

The South Carolina Department of Education, through the cooperative efforts of the Office of Programs for the Handicapped and the Office of Vocational Education, has not only sought to identify the problems in providing vocational training to handicapped pupils, but has clearly projected the issues and planned initiatives for accomplishing its goal of vocational education for all handicapped students who can benefit from vocational training.

As an initial step, the Office of Programs for the Handicapped and the Office of Vocational Education have formulated a Memorandum of Agreement. The parameters of this agreement include many of the problems identified earlier that limit vocational training of handicapped students.

Monitoring

An immediate objective of this agreement is to assure the inclusion in vocational education of handicapped pupils who are potentially employable. During monitoring for compliance with Public Law 94-142, members of the Office of Programs for the Handicapped will review individualized education plans for evidence that vocational education has been considered in the formulation of the IEP for secondary level students and, if determined as needed, whether the student is receiving vocational training. Additional monitoring will be implemented jointly by the Office of Vocational Education and the Office of Programs for the Handicapped to determine appropriateness of vocational training for handicapped pupils. A review of the individualized education plans, observation of students in vocational classes and interviews with school district personnel are techniques to be utilized to assess the appropriateness of the vocational training.

Model for development of IEP's with Vocational Education component

Determining appropriate vocational education training and program models relative to the least restrictive environment for handicapped pupils will require input from a staffing committee that includes special educators, vocational educators, parents, the student, and guidance personnel. Student interests, job opportunities and special needs are some concerns that must be considered by this committee in guiding and placing a student into an appropriate vocational education program. Many handicapped pupils will need adaptations or support services to benefit from regular vocational education. A small number of pupils will need separate programs or facilities to acquire vocational skills. To assist local education agencies in these decisions, the Office of Programs for the Handicapped and the Office of Vocational Education will prepare and disseminate a model for cooperative planning in the development of individualized education plans when a vocational education component is needed.

Program Design

Handicapped students will require unique approaches in the attainment of vocational skills. While specialists in the education of the handicapped are knowledgeable in handicapping conditions, specialists in vocational training must provide the methodologies and techniques of vocational training for handicapped students. The Office of Programs for the Handicapped and the Office of Vocational Education will collaborate in the

development of appropriate program designs to enrich vocational education programs for the handicapped and disseminate these to local school districts.

Both Public Law 94-142 and Public Law 94-482 require that the State Education Agency ensure that there is a plan for personnel development. These provisions must be identified in the Annual Program Plan.

> Each annual program plan must .... Identify the target populations for personnel development, including general education and special education instructional and administrative personnel ....
>
> P. L. 94-142, Section 121a.383(c)

Personnel Development

> Funds available to the State ... may be used to support programs and projects designed to improve the qualifications of persons who are eligible under §104.773, including (but not limited to) the following:
>
> ... teachers and supervisors ... to improve the quality of instruction, supervision and administration of vocational education for persons who are disadvantaged or handicapped ....
>
> P. L. 94-482, Section 104.774(e)

The Office of Programs for the Handicapped and the Office of Vocational Education are planning in-service training for State Education Agency personnel and subsequently, local education agency personnel, involved in the vocational education of handicapped pupils. This in-service will review problems in providing vocational education, consider new approaches and initiatives for solving the problems, and bring about an awareness of steps that have been taken to provide vocational training to handicapped pupils.

Sources of funds

Vocational education programs and programs for the handicapped are recipients of separate funding from state appropriations and federal funds, mainly Public Laws 94-142 and 94-482. Funding for vocational education of the handicapped through these two laws will be reviewed conjunctively by the Office of Programs for the Handicapped and the Office of Vocational Education to determine areas of fiscal responsibility relegated by each law in order to ensure that appropriate programs are provided, but that duplication of services is avoided. A study will be disseminated to districts to clarify

areas of responsibility relative to funding; other possible sources of funds to supplement and modify vocational education for handicapped students will be investigated and results will be included in this report.

Career counseling for handicapped pupils and their parents

The selection of a career and the acquisition of the first job are important milestones in the life of any person. Preparation for this important step requires guidance/counseling and support from teachers, counselors and parents. It is imperative that guidance/counseling be available to both handicapped pupils and their parents to make them aware of career opportunities, conditions of the labor market, and preparation needed for employment in a chosen career. There are many special problems in counseling handicapped pupils and their parents. Some parents may feel that any handicapping condition imposes limitations to a degree that the student will be unable to work or live independently. Other parents may have difficulty in accepting the fact that their child is handicapped or that the handicapping condition may limit the child's employment opportunities.

Guidance counselors have been included as eligible participants in vocational personnel training programs in order to meet the special needs of handicapped pupils [Public Law 94-482, §104.774(e)]. Public Law 94-142 views parent training as a related service when needed to assist parents in understanding the special needs of their child [§121a.13(6)]. Personnel from the Office of Vocational Education and the Office of Programs for the Handicapped will collaborate in the development of vocational counseling techniques, as well as prepare a study of conditions of the labor market and employment opportunities for handicapped pupils for dissemination to local education agencies.

Title IV-C Grant to Develop a Model Program

Exemplary programs can be an effective means of assisting others with program improvement. In order to promote the development of a model program for providing vocational education services to handicapped pupils, the Office of Federal Programs and the Office of Programs for the Handicapped have recommended and received approval for the development of an exemplary and innovative project to be funded by the South Carolina Department of Education through the Office of Federal Programs. This Title IV-C competitive grant will be awarded to a local education agency with the intent that a model be developed which is amenable to replication in other local education agencies. It is envisioned that this project, to be jointly implemented by special educators and vocational educators, will address the following issues:

- The joint development of IEP's with a vocational education component
- Adaptations and modifications of the vocational curriculum to enable handicapped pupils to succeed in the regular vocational education program
- Career counseling procedures for handicapped programs and their parents
- Mechanisms for job placement
- Post-employment evaluation procedures
- Preparation of a guide to assist students after leaving public school

The mandates relative to vocational education for handicapped pupils from Public Law 94-142, Public Law 94-482 and Public Law 93-112, will require significant changes in some facets of the educational system. Bringing about change is seldom an easy task as this indicates that many established patterns and traditions may need to be revised. The problems that led to the adoption of the existing system are still present and must be resolved in order for significant revisions to occur.

It is hoped that the initiatives set forth herein will serve as change agents that will result in appropriate vocational education programs for handicapped pupils who may benefit from this.

During the time since the passage of Public Law 94-142, educators throughout the state have made great strides in providing and improving programs for handicapped pupils. Hopefully, the initiatives proposed here will bring us closer to a total service program for all school-aged handicapped pupils. The Office of Programs for the Handicapped wishes to be of assistance to those who are involved in the provision of instruction to handicapped pupils; educational concerns should be addressed to the Director, Robert S. Black.